

Federal Fire Assistance for California

Written by Mike Honda
Monday, 22 October 2007 19:00

My heart goes out to those affected by the seven-county wildfires in southern California. In times of hardship, Americans must come together to help each other. Hurricane Katrina taught us that time is of the essence, and each of us must do what we can to respond to disasters across the country. I commend those of you who have been involved in the firefighting and relief efforts, like Kay Dover, one of my constituents from San Jose. Ms. Dover is currently on a two-week deployment to assist with the firefighting efforts in San Diego. She is one of 10 AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps members who were called to help fight the fires.

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I am working with my colleagues to ensure a recovery process that is not only timely, but responsive. To this end, I joined my California Delegation colleagues last week in urging President Bush to have the necessary federal agencies within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in particular the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), ready to respond if and when Southern California was designated as a major disaster area. The President declared southern California a major disaster area on October 24. It is imperative that the federal emergency response agencies continue to coordinate and work closely with the Governor's office and the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) to provide the resources necessary to ensure a successful recovery.

Earlier this week, the California Congressional Delegation put aside partisan differences and stood united in issuing a resolution honoring the first responders and supporting the victims of the southern California wildfires.

California Wildfire Tax Relief Act of 2007

My esteemed colleague, Rep. Baca from San Bernardino, introduced the [California Wildfire Tax Relief Act](#) to help ease the strain on those who have lost their homes in the fires. While we can never replace what these families have lost, we as Members of Congress have a responsibility to help make their recovery as smooth as possible. This tax relief bill is a good start and I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this important legislation.

There is still plenty that needs to be done in order to ensure that the recovery process receives continued support so that communities can rebuild. I will continue to work with my colleagues to help California recover from the devastating fires and to make sure that our country is prepared

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to handle any kind of disaster.